

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 14, line 10, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Also, the present invention is not limited to the embodiment set forth above and may take suitable modification to be carried out in other embodiments. While in the optical fiber axial alignment device 19 and the fusion splicing device 1, one piece of optical fiber guide section 21 is located at each of both sides of the butt alignment section 9, it is not objectionable for plural pieces of optical fiber guide sections ~~[[24]]~~ 21 may be located on both sides of the butt alignment section 9 in a given distance with respect to one another in another embodiment. In such case, the plural pieces of the optical fiber guide sections 21 serve to allow the respective optical fibers 3 to be received in the associated guide groove portions 23 in a further reliable fashion.